

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

Claim 1:

1. A method of operating a Visual Basic program comprising;

capturing data from an Excel spreadsheet program data file, wherein said data is organized by lines, and wherein a set of lines contains all information needed for producing a single signal line or a header/format line, and wherein there is a multiplicity of sets of lines in a said Excel spreadsheet program data file, said capturing including,

for each set of lines of said data file information unique to a particular signal line intended to be displayed, capturing, from said Excel spreadsheet program data file by communication of a Visual Basic procedure within said Visual Basic program with said Excel spreadsheet program, said data file information,

interpreting in said Visual Basic procedure said data file information from said set of lines in accord with a command from within said set of lines,

preparing said data file information in accord with said command in said Visual Basic procedure to instruct an instance of a Visio program to draw a signal line or a header/format line in accord with said command from within said set of lines,

operating an instance of a Visio program to provide a display file containing each said particular signal line and header/format line in accord with said captured data interpreted through said command from within said set of lines pertaining to each said signal line or header/format line by

sending to said instance of Visio a command and data parameters corresponding with each said set of lines together with said command for each said set of lines so that said instance of Visio can produce a .vsd file containing sufficient information for Visio to print or display a timing chart having each signal line and header/format line incorporated therein.

Claim 2:

2. The method of Claim 1 wherein said sets of lines of said data file are read in order from one end of the data file to the opposite end of said data file and pro.

Claim 3:

3. The method of Claim 2 wherein the one end is a top and the opposite end is a bottom as said data file may be displayed by using Excel.

Claim 4:

4. A method of operating a control program for drawing a timing chart from a spreadsheet data file employing a drawing program comprising, upon initiation of said control program;

said control program captures data from said spreadsheet data file,

said control program sends commands based on said captured data to said drawing program, wherein said captured data contains commands for each line of a timing chart,

said control program interprets said commands for identifying drawing actions to be accomplished by said drawing program and wherein said control program commands said drawing program in conformity with said commands.

Claim 5:

5. The method of Claim 4 further comprising;

said step of capturing data from said spreadsheet file is executed by requesting each line of data from said spreadsheet file from a spreadsheet program which is actively running.

Claim 6:

6. The method of Claim 4 further comprising;

in said step of said control program commanding said drawing program in conformity with said commands, said drawing program produces a display modified by substantially each command.

Claim 7:

- 1 7. The method of Claim 5 wherein a user initiates use of said control program and
2 supplies the spreadsheet data file name to said control program.

Claim 8:

- 1 8. The method of Claim 7 wherein a user prior to initiating use of said control program
2 populates said spreadsheet data file having said spreadsheet data file name with timing
3 chart data.

Claim 9:

- 1 9. The method of Claim 7 wherein said step of populating said spreadsheet data file
2 having said spreadsheet data file name is accomplished in part using a graphic user
3 interface operating on said spreadsheet program.

Claim 10:

- 1 10. An apparatus for drawing a timing chart based upon data and commands in a
2 spreadsheet data file comprising:
3 a software program containing a procedure for capturing data from said
4 spreadsheet data file including a set of subroutines for interpreting said commands
5 and a subroutine for sending said interpreted commands to a drawing program
6 together with any associated datums within said data.

Claim 11:

- 1 11. An apparatus as set forth in Claim 10 wherein said software program is written in
2 Visual Basic.

Claim 12:

- 1 12. An apparatus as set forth in Claim 11 wherein said Visual Basic program subroutine
2 for capturing said data and commands from said spreadsheet data file comprises a routine
3 for requesting a row of data from a spreadsheet program.

Claim 13:

1 13. An apparatus as set forth in Claim 12 wherein said routine for requesting a row of
2 data from said spreadsheet program contains a command that can be submitted to and is
3 interpretable by Excel.

Claim 14:

1 14. An apparatus as set forth in Claim 12 wherein said subroutine for sending said
2 interpreted commands to a drawing program together with any associated datums within
3 said data contains a command interpretable by Visio.

Claim 15:

1 15. An apparatus as set forth in Claim 10 wherein said subroutine for sending said
2 interpreted commands to a drawing program together with any associated datums within
3 said data contains a command interpretable by Visio.

Claim 16:

1 16. An apparatus as set forth in Claim 10 wherein said apparatus comprises electronic
2 signals within a computer memory.

Claim 17:

1 17. An apparatus as set forth in Claim 16 wherein said computer memory is a
2 transportable disk.
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